

## IT'S A REACH

Reaching is an everyday skill, but it can pose a balance risk. Tipping points change with foot and body positions. This activity educates participants to reach smarter and safer. By redistributing their body weight they will be less likely to lose their balance when reaching for what they want.

### ***Benefits »***

- Teaches participants about their tipping point and how to control it.
- Creates safer reaching techniques.
- Links with Venus de Milo Arms and Anchors A-Sway (see Posture Affects Function and Balance, page 101) .

### ***Set It Up »***

You will need the following for this activity:

- Large, sturdy table (the top provides the reaching distance).
- Objects for them to reach. Some examples are car keys, remote controls, or prizes such as candy kisses, small toys, or movie coupons
- Masking tape

Strategically place the objects on the table, some close, others farther away. Put the more desirable items almost out of ordinary reach. Use masking tape to place a line on the floor. They must stand behind the line in order to reach for the objects of desire.

### ***How to Do It »***

Warm up and stretch the shoulders with shoulder rolls, reaching stretches, and neck stretches.

#### ***Reach With Knees Straight and Feet Parallel***

Use the following cues.

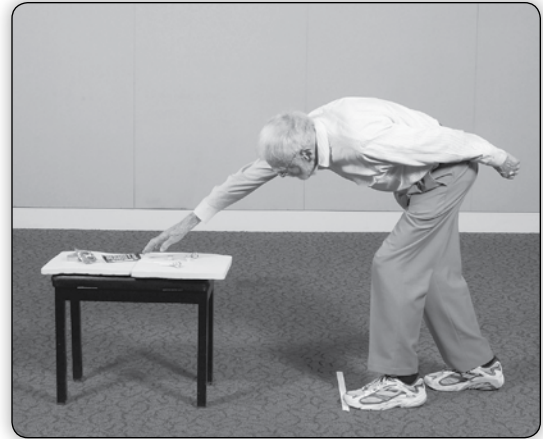
- Stand with feet parallel, toes behind the line, and knees straight.
- Reach for an object, keeping your knees straight. (Hinge forward from hip.)
  - Reach a little farther.
  - Do you feel your weight shift toward the table when your knees are straight?
  - Can you begin to feel a tipping point? (They will)



### ***Reach With Hips Back and Feet Offset***

The assignment for participants is to notice how this position works and how it affects their personal tipping point. Use the following cues.

- ⦿ Stand with feet offset and shoulder-width apart (one foot forward, one back). The front foot is on the line.
- ⦿ Bend your hips and knees. (Hips move backward so that they are over or beyond the back foot.)
- ⦿ Now reach for the object you'd like.
  - Do you notice any differences with your feet offset?
  - Has your tipping point changed? Where is it now? (It's farther back.)
  - Why do you think it changed? (More of their weight is behind the line.)
  - Can you tell your weight is redistributed?
  - Reach again. Does this feel better? Safer?
  - Use your Venus de Milo arms to reach even farther (use length from ribs and shoulder extending toward the object).
- ⦿ Compare the choices.
  - Repeat with straight knees and parallel feet, as you did earlier.
  - Repeat again with offset foot position and hips back.
  - Do you feel the difference? Did one feel like you could reach farther more safely?
  - Good, grab some goodies!



### ***Give It More Balance »***

- ⦿ While participants are reaching in the correct position (offset feet, hips back), have them reach the other arm backward.
- ⦿ Ask them if that helps. (It's an even better redistribution of weight.)

### ***Keep It Safe »***

Use a sturdy prize table; it may be needed to help arrest lost balance. The pictured table is too short and unstable to provide adequate balance support. A dining room table works great. Participants should only reach as far as they feel is comfortable and safe.

### ***Live It »***

Tipping points change with foot and body positions. Participants can safely reach farther with their best foot forward and their hips back.